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MARTIN O'BRIEN-KELLY: THE ROLE OF NATURAL RESOURCES
IN THE KHMER ROUGE – ROYAL GOVERNMENT OF CAMBODIA
PEACE NEGOTIATIONS AND REINTEGRATION PROCESS. THESIS
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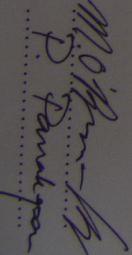
The 1996 Khmer Rouge (KR) defections were a precursor for the ultimate termination of Cambodia's protracted civil. During the Royal Government of Cambodia's (RGC) first mandate, KR factions broke from the hard-line KR elites and negotiated with the government. The Win-Win policy encouraged these defections. This policy was based on economic goals, a power sharing agreement and promises of development for marginalized areas.

Because the political parties viewed defecting KR units as valuable political commodities, they used shadow state politics to extend their respective patron-client systems to include former-KR people. Peace was achieved, but laws and the environment were sacrificed to achieve that peace. For example, the Royal Decree of 1993 was contravened to secure the allegiance of one KR faction. This decree designated a protected area in one former-KR stronghold, in Veal Veng, Pursat province. Moreover, the Win-Win policy failed to address and integrate natural resources management into the negotiation framework for peace and reintegration. This was imperative for many KR strongholds possessed vast forests and the potential for timber extraction. In the post-conflict development period, there has been conflict over natural resource management between the reintegrating community and the Ministry of Environment who is mandated to protect the wildlife sanctuary in Veal Veng.

This research analyzes the motives for peace, which reveals the government's intentions for peace were not financial but political. Shadow State politics explains how economic considerations and natural resource wealth were transformed into political commodities. The currents of economics and politics converged in the Win-Win policy.

In conflict where forest resources have played a role, the peace negotiations must address natural resources management and include this management in the reintegration process. This will ensure environmental protection and provide sustainable livelihoods for reintegrating communities. A community-based post-conflict development strategy including natural resource (forest) management can be a model for peace building where conflict has involved forest resources.

Field of Study International Development Studies Student's signature:



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